

Request for Proposals

2025 Coastal Resilience Program

Executive Summary

Funding Source: National Sea Grant Law Center, University of Mississippi using federal funds from NOAA Sea Grant

Funding Opportunity Title: 2025 Coastal Resilience Program

Announcement Type: Notice of Request for Proposals

Timetable: Letters of Intent must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 5, 2025. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 7, 2025. The anticipated award start date is February 1, 2026.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to advise the public that the National Sea Grant Law Center (Law Center) is accepting applications from eligible applicants to conduct research on the effectiveness of laws and policies related to a wide range of coastal resilience issues including sea level rise, flooding, amplified storm surge, increased frequency and intensity of storms, land use, or other environmental factors, and whether those policies are achieving desired policy changes. The *2025 Coastal Resilience Program* grants have a recommended two-year project period and funding level of \$150,000, and the Law Center anticipates selecting up to two projects for funding. Matching funds will not be required.

Full Announcement

The Law Center is part of the National Sea Grant College Program, and is housed at the University of Mississippi School of Law. Established in 2002, the Law Center is a nationally recognized and respected resource for information on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes law. The Law Center fulfills its mission by implementing integrated legal programming based on the three legs of the Sea Grant “stool,” research, education, and outreach. The Law Center strives to support the creation of new law and policy knowledge through rigorous, peer-reviewed research competitions. To that end, the Law Center requests proposals from eligible applicants to conduct research on the effectiveness of coastal resilience laws and policies. For more information about the Law Center and its work, please visit our website at <http://nsglc.olemiss.edu/>.

This announcement provides the following information:

1. Eligible Applicants

2. Funding Priorities
3. Funding Levels
4. Letter of Intent Format
5. Proposal Format
6. Proposal Submission Instructions
7. Evaluation Procedure
8. Evaluation Criteria
9. Deadline and Submission Information
10. Timetable

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible and encouraged to participate in this funding opportunity: Sea Grant Programs, institutions of higher education, government agencies, and non-profit organizations that have the ability and capacity to conduct rigorous, non-partisan law and policy research.

Sea Grant is committed to building inclusive research programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. We encourage all eligible applicants to apply for this opportunity.

Only those applicants who submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by the required deadline are subsequently eligible to submit full proposals.

Funding Priorities

The Law Center is soliciting applications for legal and policy scholars to assess the effectiveness of a discrete coastal resilience law, policy, or program. While various analyses often occur before laws and policies are adopted—such as cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and risk assessment—rarely does analysis happen after laws and policies are adopted. There is a need for scholars and policy-makers to review the effectiveness of policies that have been adopted to inform program development and future resilience efforts. As communities continue to think about what policies to adopt, these analyses are a useful exercise to determine whether laws and policies have essential elements necessary to achieve objectives. A review of existing laws and policies is also a vital approach to adaptive management. Retrospective law and policy analysis can help policymakers decide which policies to adopt in the future and how to amend current policies to make them more beneficial. Finally, a review of policies can not only ascertain whether the intended consequences were achieved but also if any unintended or undesirable consequences occurred.

Projects solicited through this announcement should address the effectiveness of a single or distinct set of laws, policies, or programs related to coastal resilience. For the purposes of this competition, coastal resilience is defined as the ability of coastal environments and communities to adapt to environmental stressors. Such stressors may include sea level rise, increased flooding, amplified storm surge, more frequent and intense storms, land use changes, pollution, or other environmental factors. Projects should focus on a law, policy, or program related to the coastal areas of U.S. coastal states, including the Great Lakes states, U.S. territories and tribal lands, and whether the associated policies are achieving desired policy changes. Successful research projects should be designed in collaboration with the government entity responsible for implementing the current policy to generate new knowledge about the impact and effectiveness of coastal resilience laws and policies to achieve stated policy objectives.

The Law Center is interested in research proposals that clearly identify the coastal resilience law, policy, or program and the methodology for examining effectiveness relative to its “on-the-ground” impact (if any). The Law Center is not interested in proposals that focus solely on reviewing or analyzing the written products of coastal resilience laws, policies, or programs (e.g. plans or similar documents). Rather, the Law Center seeks to fund projects that investigate whether a discrete law, policy, or program is effectively achieving its stated coastal resilience objectives (e.g., more flood-resistant buildings, preservation of critical areas). Projects considered under this request for proposals may use a range of research methodologies to assess the effectiveness of the identified law, policy, or program. Please see the Law Center’s Funded Project webpage for an overview of projects funded through previous Coastal Resilience Program competitions: <https://nsglc.olemiss.edu/funding/current-past-projects/index.html>.

In addition to supporting research projects that are academically rigorous and societally relevant, the Law Center is committed to projects that engage and inform relevant communities. Successful projects will include strong engagement and outreach plans that clearly outline how the research will be usable and accessible to key partners and audiences. Researchers must demonstrate that the government entity responsible for implementing the policy will be involved in each phase of the research project. Researchers are strongly encouraged to engage with other prospective end-users and audiences as they develop their proposal to assess and ensure societal relevance. Examples of engagement and outreach activities could include:

- Partnering with a state agency or organization that will be an end user of the research;
- Engaging community members in the research aspects of your project;
- Writing non-technical summary of research findings for managers and key audiences; or
- Presenting your findings to relevant management and community organizations.

Funding Levels

The *Coastal Resilience Program* grants have a recommended funding level of \$150,000, and the Law Center anticipates selecting up to two projects for funding. Matching funds will not be required.

Letters of Intent Format

To be eligible to submit a full proposal, a Letter of Intent (LOI) is required. LOIs will help the Law Center identify the required number and qualifications of reviewers and provide feedback to applicants on the appropriateness of the proposed research projects to the *Coastal Resilience Program*. Regardless of the Law Center's feedback, any applicant that submits an eligible LOI may submit a full proposal.

The LOI (max. 2 page not including CVs) shall consist of the following:

1. Anticipated title of the proposed project.
2. Expected project duration (all projects should show a 24-month duration with an anticipated start date of February 1, 2026).
3. Total budget request estimate.
4. Lead Principal Investigator: Name, Title, Institutional Affiliation, Contact Information, two-page Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch.
5. Known and Anticipated Co-Investigator(s): Name, Title, Institutional Affiliation, Contact Information, two-page Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch.
6. Brief summary of the proposed research project that clearly states the research problem, study objective and rationale, and interested parties and potential end-users.
7. Brief statement of the applicant's qualifications to conduct the proposed research.
8. Full name, title, and contact information (email) for three individuals who are especially well qualified to review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Law Center's discretion. Suggested reviewers will not be assigned to the applicant's proposal to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Please combine all LOI documents into one PDF file. The LOI should be submitted to Lauren Fremin, Project Coordinator for the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, lrfremin@olemiss.edu. An email confirming receipt of the LOI will be sent within 24 business hours. Applicants not receiving a confirmation email should contact Lauren Fremin at (662) 915-7187. Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 pm Central Time on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025**.

Proposal Format

Proposals are to be submitted as a single file in pdf format via email. The instructions provided below for submitting proposals must be followed. Information requested for each of the

following sections must be included in the proposal. Proposals that are missing required elements listed below, or applications coming from ineligible applicants may be rejected without further review. The Law Center in its sole discretion may continue review of those applications with minor deficiencies that may be easily cured.

Changes in lead investigator or lead institution post-LOI submission are permitted if the original PI remains on the team with no major changes in the scope of the project.

Cover Page

The proposal should include a cover page listing the title of the proposal, PI and Co-PI names, titles, affiliations, and contact information of the PI and any Co-PIs.

Project Narrative

The maximum length for the narrative is 10 pages using a minimum of 12-point font (1-inch margins). Additional pages will not be considered, and the entire proposal rejected if the stated number of pages is exceeded. The project narrative must include the following subsections:

1. **Project Abstract.** Provide a general summary of the purpose of the project, activities to be performed, expected outcomes, and intended beneficiaries (limit 500 words).
2. **Project Background.** Explain the specific opportunities and challenges this project seeks to address and justify its importance. Applicants should clearly identify:
 - a. The coastal resilience law, policy, or program to be examined.
 - b. The history and significance of this identified law, policy, or program.
 - c. The need for the proposed analysis, including how it builds on or addresses gaps in the existing literature.
 - d. The relevance of the proposed analysis to this RFP.
3. **Project Objectives.** Provide a list of clearly defined objectives and how those objectives align with goals and priorities of this RFP.
4. **Project Details.** Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives. Applicants must clearly describe the methodology that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the identified coastal resilience law, policy, or program and explain how various components of the research project will be conducted. Applicants must also explicitly describe how they will collaborate with the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal resilience policy under consideration.
5. **Anticipated Outcomes and Results.** Detail the anticipated results of this project and which specific key audiences would benefit from or apply the results.
6. **Project Timeline.** All projects should show a 24-month timeline with a start date of February 1, 2026. Detail when key project activities and outputs would occur within the two-year project period.

7. **Engagement and Outreach Plan.** Detail the anticipated engagement and outreach approach. Applicants should identify key target audiences and the specific outreach strategies that will be used to reach them. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include sufficient funds in the budget for the outreach and engagement component, as applicable. *Publication of results in academic journals alone is insufficient evidence of a successful outreach and engagement strategy.*

Curriculum Vitae

The maximum length is two pages for each principal and co-principal investigator. The vitae must provide evidence of the investigator's education, qualifications, and experience in the field.

Literature Cited

References required if used in the proposal; citation of literature is important to establish the familiarity and expertise of the PI to the subject in the proposal. Include full citation: name of author, title, and location in the literature (no maximum length, single-spaced).

Letters of Commitment and Support

The Law Center requires letters of commitment from any named collaborators or partners providing direct funding support or with responsibility for implementing key aspects of the proposed project. Letters of commitment are not required from collaborators or partners serving on advisory committees or contributing expertise through similar means.

In addition, the Law Center requires a letter of support from the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal resilience policy under consideration.

The Law Center also encourages up to two additional letters of support from potential partners or end users that may benefit from the proposed work.

Data Management Plan & Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire

To be recommended for funding, applicants must provide a valid environmental data management plan (or alternative statement if no data management plan is needed), as well as a completed Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire (and copies of associated permits, if applicable). The Data Management Plan and Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire are not required at the time of submission of the full proposal. Additional guidance about how to provide this information will be provided to successful applicants upon notice of selection for funding.

Budget and Justification

A Budget and a Budget Justification are required. The Budget should be prepared using the standard Sea Grant 90-4 budget form available on the Law Center's funding page at

<https://nsglc.olemiss.edu/funding/index.html>. The narrative Budget Justification should itemize and explain all budget items in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. Please pay special attention to any travel, supply, or promotional budgets and provide details. Subcontracts, if any, should have a separate budget page and justification.

Applicants may include indirect (F&A) costs in their budget at their institution's federally negotiated appropriate rate for the activity proposed.

Applicant Demographics Questionnaire

After submission of full proposals, all PIs will be asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to help us assess the demographics of applicants to this research competition. Any PI responses will be anonymous with no linkage to their proposal submission. A response to the questionnaire is voluntary and will play no role in the funding decision-making process. Any responses received will be shared with the National Sea Grant Office.

Proposal Submission Instructions

Please combine all proposal documents into one PDF file. The proposal should be submitted to Lauren Fremin, Project Coordinator for the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, lrfremin@olemiss.edu. If you experience technical difficulties during submission or do not receive an email confirmation acknowledging receipt within 24 hours of the competition's closing time, please contact Lauren Fremin at (662) 915-7187 as soon as possible. Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 pm Central Time on **Wednesday, May 7, 2025**.

Evaluation Procedure

LOIs will be reviewed by the Law Center for appropriateness to the grant program. Each full proposal received will be reviewed by three external peer reviewers using the criteria set forth below. Proposals will then be reviewed, scored, and ranked by a Technical Review Panel (TRP) guided by the peer reviews and objective criteria listed below. Individuals selected to serve as peer reviewers or TRP members will be attorneys, resource managers, academics, and Sea Grant extension agents/specialists familiar with current ocean, coastal, and marine issues free from conflict of interest.

The Law Center will conduct a final review of the proposals, taking into account the TRP's recommendations and advice. The Law Center Director has final discretion to select research projects, based on the panel's recommendations, topical and geographic diversity and balance of proposals, availability of funding, and alignment with programmatic objectives, needs and priorities.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Rationale (20%).** This criterion assesses whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work. Specifically, this criterion assesses whether a discrete coastal resilience law, policy, or program is clearly identified, whether the research question is valid and significant, whether the researchers demonstrate adequate awareness of significant present or previous work.
- **Project merit, objectives, methods and feasibility (30%).** This criterion assesses whether the project's proposed approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate and likely to achieve desired results, whether there are clear project goals and objectives tied to the overall goals of this research competition (i.e., assessing the effectiveness of coastal resilience policies), the level of collaboration with the government entity responsible for implementing the coastal resilience policy under consideration, whether the time frame is appropriate to complete the project, and whether appropriate levels of resources (budget) are dedicated to the project.
- **Societal impact (10%).** This criterion assesses the degree to which the proposed research will have a positive impact on society, specifically through the advancement of coastal resilience law and policy. This criterion also assesses the extent to which the project provides opportunities for law student or other graduate student involvement.
- **Qualifications of the research team and results from prior work, including work funded by the National Sea Grant Law Center (if applicable) (10%).** This criterion assesses whether the applicant and partners possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the proposed activities. This criterion also evaluates whether researchers previously funded by the National Sea Grant Law Center were successful in accomplishing their prior projects.
- **Strength of engagement plan (30%).** This criterion assesses whether the project effectively engages key audiences, including the state agency responsible for implementing the coastal resilience policy under consideration and provides a focused, effective, and equitable engagement and outreach strategy. This criterion also assesses how well the project engages underserved communities in addressing coastal resilience issues.

Deadline and Submission Information

LOIs must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, March 5, 2025. Full proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, May 7, 2025. Full proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Lauren Fremin at lfremin@olemiss.edu.

General questions about the *Coastal Resilience Program* and the scope of projects considered should be directed to Stephanie Otts, Director of the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, sshowalt@olemiss.edu, or phone, (662) 915-7714. General questions about the application process should be directed to Lauren Fremin, Project Coordinator for the National Sea Grant Law Center, via email, lrfremin@olemiss.edu.

The Law Center has a FAQ document available on our website at <https://nsglc.olemiss.edu/funding/index.html>. We strongly encourage applicants to review this document before reaching out with questions via email.

Timetable

The *Coastal Resilience Program* process takes approximately twelve months from the request for proposals to the initiation date. The following dates provide milestones throughout the process:

RFP Released:	January 8, 2025
Letters of Intent Due:	March 5, 2025
Full Proposals Due:	May 7, 2025
Notification of Project Selection:	August 6, 2025
Award Start Date:	February 1, 2026